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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Twenty-fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 642nd MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 18 September 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. OUEDRAOGO

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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GE.00-44454 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRPERSON declared open the Committee's twenty-fifth session and emphasized the ambitious schedule facing the Committee which would be considering nine country reports, including seven initial reports. In addition, a full day of general discussion would be dedicated to the theme of State violence against children, and the Committee would continue its work on a general comment to be issued in early 2001 on article 29 of the Convention to serve as its contribution to the forthcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The Committee would also consider means of improving its working methods. She welcomed Mr. Gaham, Chief of the Support Services Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and invited him to address the Committee.

2. Mr. GAHAM (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that since the last session of the Committee, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had taken the occasion of the Millennium Summit, which had been attended by some 150 heads of State and Government, to call for the universal ratification of all international human rights instruments and to appeal to States to ensure that OHCHR would have the resources required to fulfil its mandate once full ratification was achieved. The Annual Appeal issued by OHCHR in 2000, which in part covered the plans of action in support of the treaty bodies, had received a positive response. The Millennium Summit and the Secretary-General's specific call for support had given new impetus to the signing of both Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To date 68 States had signed the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and 63 had signed the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

3. OHCHR had begun working on the report of the Secretary-General for the special session of the General Assembly on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, scheduled for September 2001. The amendment to article 43 (3) of the Convention, increasing the Committee's membership from 10 to 18, had been accepted by 92 of the required 120 States. The rights of the child had figured prominently in the work of a number of other human rights bodies, including the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

4. At the recent session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, it had been decided to hold an informal session in January 2001 which would be open to all States, in order to deal with certain procedural matters and to move ahead in drawing up a draft declaration and programme of action for adoption at the Conference. It was therefore of the utmost importance that the treaty bodies should respect the deadlines for the submission of their reports and contributions, to ensure that the Preparatory Committee and the Conference would be able to take their views into consideration.

5. OHCHR had undertaken a series of regional seminars on human rights in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, some of which had included the participation of members of

the Committee. Lastly, the Committee's attention was drawn to the most recent Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme, which had focussed exclusively on the theme of human rights and development.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (CRC/C/98)

6. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES (agenda item 3)

7. Mr. DAVID (Secretary of the Committee) said that, since the Committee's previous session, initial reports had been received from Gabon, the United Arab Emirates, Mozambique, Andorra, Malawi, Bahrain and Guinea-Bissau, and that Jamaica, the Libyan Arab Jamahariya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Morocco had submitted their second periodic reports. That brought the number of reports received to 194, including 153 initial reports and 41 periodic reports. The Committee had considered 131 reports; 42 initial reports and 104 periodic reports due to have been submitted had still not been received. Owing to the backlog, the Committee currently considered reports one or two years after their submission.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.35 a.m.